

Kawaihae Harbor, Big Island, Hawaii, USA

A raw, working harbor on the Big Island's sun-baked Kohala Coast — your gateway to sacred Hawaiian history, famous white-sand beaches, and the cool paniolo hill town of Waimea.

Pier (industrial commercial wharf)

Typical call: 7-9 hrs

USD

English / Hawaiian

Hot & dry — bring sunscreen

MY DAY IN PORT

Ship/Date: _____ Arrive: _____ All aboard: _____

Excursion: _____ Notes: _____

GETTING ASHORE

Docking: Pier (commercial wharf) — shuttle to port gate

Walk to center: 10–15 min to Kawaihae shops; Pu‘ukoholā Heiau 15–20 min

Best For: Beaches, Hawaiian history, Waimea day trip, snorkeling

Don't Miss: Pu‘ukoholā Heiau & Hāpuna Beach

Getting around: Taxi ✓ \$35–\$55 · Rideshare ✓ Uber, Lyft, holoholo

TOP THINGS TO DO

- Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site** — Walk to this immense stone temple built by King Kamehameha the Great in 1790–91 as he unified the Hawaiian islands.
- Hāpuna Beach** — Consistently ranked one of Hawaii's finest beaches — a long sweep of powdery white sand with brilliant turquoise water, lifeguards, showers, and a...
- Spencer Beach Park (Samuel M. Spencer)** — A calm, reef-protected beach just 1.5 miles south of the harbor — great for swimming, snorkeling, and families.
- Waimea (Kamuela) Town & Parker Ranch** — Drive 15 minutes uphill into Hawaii's paniolo cowboy country.
- Pololū Valley Lookout** — Drive north to the end of Highway 270 for a stunning panorama of dramatic windward sea cliffs and the green Pololū Valley.

BEST WALKS

- Port Gate to Pu‘ukoholā Heiau** 1 mile · 20 min · Easy · Flat highway shoulder — Head south from the port gate along Akoni Pule Highway (Route 270) to reach Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site.
- Port Gate to Kawaihae Shopping Center** 0.5 mile · 10 min · Easy — Walk north along the highway to the Kawaihae Shopping Center for local restaurants (Kohala Burger & Taco, Cafe Pesto), a small grocery, and the Hamakua Macadamia Nut...

WEATHER · DAYLIGHT · MONEY

CLIMATE (AVG °F · RAINY DAYS)

	Mon	High	Low	Rain
Apr		82°	69°	12d
Jun		85°	71°	10d
Aug		86°	73°	11d
Sep		87°	73°	11d
Oct		85°	72°	11d

DAYLIGHT & MONEY

Apr 6:05AM–6:41PM · Jun 5:44AM–7:03PM · Aug 6:03AM–6:51PM · Sep 6:11AM–6:25PM · Oct 6:18AM–5:59PM

USD

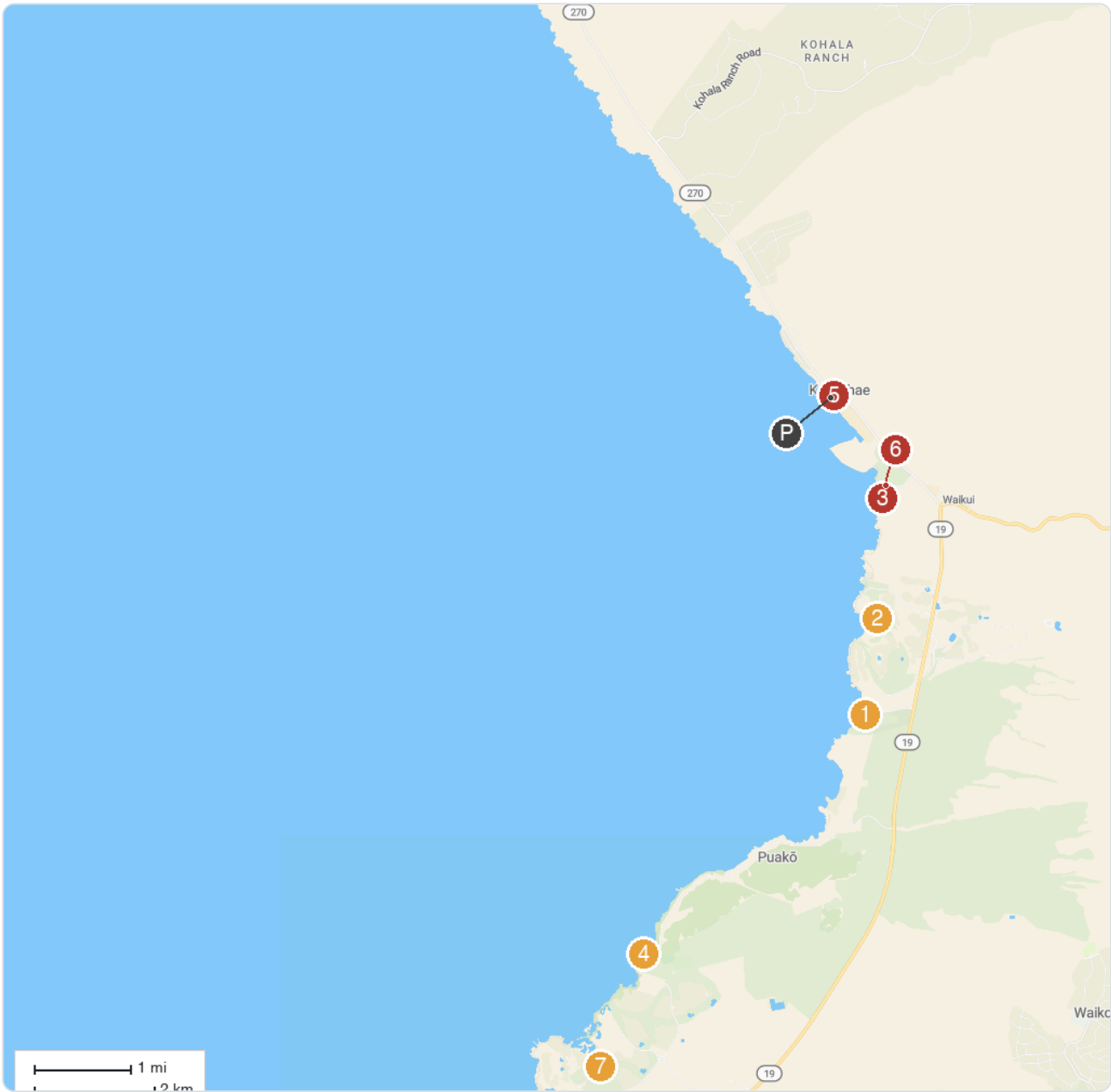
KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Sun is serious here. Kawaihae is one of the driest, sunniest spots in Hawaii. Reef-safe sunscreen, a wide-brim hat, and a full water bottle are non-negotiable from the moment you step off the shuttle.
- Pre-arrange transport. Uber and Lyft rarely serve this area. If you're not on a ship excursion, book a private tour or taxi in advance — you may be stranded at the shopping center otherwise.
- Shark sanctuary at the heiau. The shallow bay beside Pu‘ukoholā Heiau is a natural shark sanctuary — blacktip reef sharks are frequently visible from shore. Don't swim there, but do look.
- Mumuku winds. The Kohala coast is famous for strong, gusty downslope winds. Hold on to hats and light items — conditions can change quickly.
- Best snorkeling is at Spencer Beach, just 1.5 miles south — calm, reef-protected water and abundant fish. Free entry and lifeguards on duty most days.
- Whale season (Dec–Apr): Humpback whales frequent the Kohala Coast as part of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary. Look from deck or from Pu‘ukoholā.

Kawaihae Harbor, Big Island, Hawaii, USA — Port Map

cruiseports.org

Red = walkable sights · Amber = excursions farther out · P = cruise terminal. Numbers match the order you'd typically visit.



1	Hapuna Beach State Recreation Area	Expansive white sand beach, perfect for swimming and sunbathing.
3	Spencer Beach Park	Sheltered, family-friendly beach with calm waters and picnic areas.
5	Harbor Gallery	Art gallery featuring local Hawaiian artists and crafts.
7	Mauna Lani Golf	Two championship golf courses with lava and ocean views.
2	Mauna Kea Golf Course	Championship golf course with stunning ocean views.
4	Holoholokai Beach Park	Rocky beach featuring ancient petroglyphs and tide pools.
6	Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site	Historic Hawaiian temple built by King Kamehameha I.
P	Cruise port / terminal	